

S-E-C-R-E-T

RR

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1. The US is in VN for several reasons (all of them evil), but one reason is certainly to hurt China. Americans admit this when they say, in one form or another, that China must be "stopped", "contained", "taught not to interfere", etc. Put into Chinese terms this means at least loss of face (which hurts us as a world power), and at most, another link in the chain of encirclement (which threatens our existence).
  2. Can the US achieve its objectives? No, not as long as the North VN regime continues to have effective control over its area and insurgency continues in South VN. In these circumstances it is the US which will lose face, and encirclement may be weakened; e.g. five more years of war might damage the US-Japanese relationship.
  3. Will courses of action now being discussed in the US enable US to gain its objectives? Probably not, but we can't be entirely sure of this.
  4. Do we intervene before the degree of success of US actions is clearly apparent? No, no need to run risks when odds are against complete US success and when, at least in early stages, the US will gain political opprobrium faster than military advantages.
  5. But what do we do if US a) reduces insurgency in South VN to insignificant level, or b) in attempting this practically destroys the Hanoi regime? We would probably have to accept a), but take full propaganda advantage of it, since we believe that the US wants to and will be forced to maintain a military presence in South VN for a long time. We cannot accept b), At all costs we must preserve a viable and friendly regime in Hanoi.
  6. If we have to intervene in North VN, it will be costly, but not disastrous. The US cannot risk an unlimited war against us. The US may threaten to use nuclear weapons but almost certainly will not, and we can risk the 10% chance that it will. A limited war would be much less limited than the Korean one, but we could survive heavy battering of South China. And at some stage, the US would get fed up with the mess and we could get a settlement which would preserve at least part of a Communist North VN.

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7. Conclusion: Wait and see, strengthen North VN in every way short of direct military confrontation with the US, and be ready to intervene when it becomes absolutely necessary for the survival of the Hanoi regime.



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